



International Boundary and Water Commission United States Section

For immediate release
October 15, 2008

PUBLIC MEETING TO DISCUSS CONDITIONS IN THE RIO GRANDE BASIN

Impacts to the Lower Rio Grande Valley from upstream flooding and activities of the Texas Clean Rivers Program for the Rio Grande will be discussed at a public meeting of the Lower Rio Grande Citizens' Forum (LRGCF). The LRGCF was established by the United States Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC) to facilitate the exchange of information between the USIBWC and members of the public about Commission activities in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. The meeting will take place Wednesday, October 29, 4:00 - 6:00 p.m. at the USIBWC office at 325 Golf Course Road in Mercedes, Texas.

USIBWC Lower Rio Grande Operations Manager Patrick Daize will give an update on flood and reservoir conditions in the Rio Grande basin. In September, flooding on the Conchos River in Mexico caused the Rio Grande to flood at Presidio, Texas-Ojinaga, Chihuahua and at other downstream locations. The high flows prompted the Commission to go into flood operations at Amistad Dam at Del Rio, TX-Ciudad Acuña, Coahuila, resulting in increased releases from the dam. Those releases, in turn, have flowed downstream into Falcon Dam – the reservoir that holds much of the Valley's water supply. The Valley has also been impacted by flood conditions in the San Juan River in Mexico, which flows into the Rio Grande at Rio Grande City, Texas.

Mr. Daize will also review USIBWC operations during Hurricane Dolly. Although the Rio Grande did not experience flood conditions as a result of the July storm, high flows were experienced in

the Commission's floodways. USIBWC personnel addressed issues related to drainage structures along the river and floodways, and assisted communities affected by localized flooding.

In other business, the USIBWC will discuss activities of the Texas Clean Rivers Program (CRP) for the Rio Grande. The USIBWC operates the program under contract with the State of Texas, working with various partners to monitor water quality in the U.S. portion of the Rio Grande basin. USIBWC Environmental Protection Specialist Elizabeth Verdecchia will distribute copies of the 2008 Basin Summary Report that discusses water quality trends in the basin over the last five years and will discuss future studies and projects. In the Brownsville area, monitoring has detected a water quality impairment due to bacteria. To address the concern, planning is underway for a special study with the University of Texas at Brownsville to identify sources of bacteria contamination. Ms. Verdecchia will also discuss the application process for grants the CRP will offer in 2009 for small projects related to water quality or environmental education for the Rio Grande in Texas.

A complete meeting agenda follows. Members of the public who would like more information may contact the USIBWC's Lower Rio Grande Project Office at 956-565-3150 or the Public Affairs Office at sallyspener@ibwc.gov.

For more information:

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LOWER RIO GRANDE CITIZENS' FORUM

Wednesday, October 29, 2008

4:00 - 6:00 P.M.

USIBWC Conference Room

325 Golf Course Road

Mercedes, TX 78570

AGENDA

- Welcome and Introductions - Bill Lewis, Citizens' Forum Co-Chair
- Texas Clean Rivers Program for the Rio Grande, Water Quality Monitoring – Elizabeth Verdecchia, Environmental Protection Specialist, USIBWC
- Flood Conditions and Reservoir Status in the Rio Grande Basin – Patrick Daize, Lower Rio Grande Operations Manager, USIBWC
- USIBWC Response to Hurricane Dolly – Patrick Daize, Area Operations Manager, USIBWC
- Public Comment
- Board Discussion
- Suggested Future Agenda Items

If you have a disability that you wish to self-identify confidentially that requires accommodation, please advise us ahead of time.

For more information, call 956-565-3150 or e-mail sallyspener@ibwc.gov.